

TREATING SEVERE LOW BLOOD SUGAR



WHAT IS SEVERE LOW BLOOD SUGAR?

Severe low blood sugar is also called severe hypoglycemia. It is when your blood sugar falls so fast and low that you do not have time to treat it.

Sometimes you may be aware of what is going on but cannot do anything about it. Other times you may not be aware of what is going on and pass out. It can happen when you are awake or when you are asleep.

It is likely that you will have mild low blood sugar reactions from time to time. But severe reactions are

not common or likely. You should do all you can to avoid a severe low blood sugar.

When you have severe low blood sugar you might:

- Feel confused
- Not be able to move
- Pass out, or faint
- Have a seizure

How can I treat severe low blood sugar?

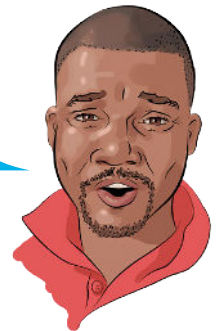
To treat a severe low blood sugar, you will need help from another person. Always have glucagon on hand. Glucagon is a shot that will raise your blood sugar level. It comes in a kit for injection or in a nasal spray. Someone needs to know how to use it to give it to you.

Train the people you live with and a co-worker on how to give glucagon. They can train in the doctor's office or practice with a glucagon device.



Glucagon helps raise blood sugar levels if you are not able to eat, drink or if you have passed out. It raises sugar levels by signaling the liver to release stored sugar.

My blood sugar was so low I passed out. When I woke up, I was in the hospital. If I had glucagon at home, I could have avoided a trip to the hospital.



ABOUT GLUCAGON

Glucagon That You Inject

Glucagon that needs to be mixed:

It is a kit that has a syringe and a vial of emergency medicine in it. When someone with diabetes has passed out or cannot take some form of sugar by mouth, someone else gives the shot.

This Glucagon kit cannot be prepared ahead of time. You will need to mix the powder and liquid from the kit right before you give it. Just follow the steps that are given in the kit. It may help to practice mixing with an expired kit so you know how to do it. Do not use the expired kit though.

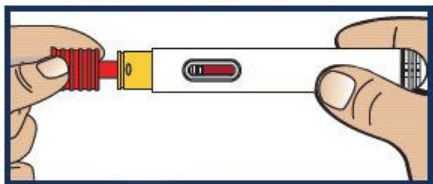
Adults are given 1mg (the entire shot). There is no danger of overdose. Since the needle is big, the shot is given in a large muscle, such as the buttocks, thigh or arm.

The kit looks like this. Based on the brand you get, it may be a different color or have a different shaped case.



Glucagon that does not need to be mixed

This injection comes in a pen like an epi pen. It does not require mixing. This pen has 2 simple steps: 1) Pull off Red cap; 2) Push the yellow end into the upper arm, stomach or thigh. Hold for 5 seconds. The window will turn Red letting you know the medicine has been given. The glucagon pen that does not need to be mixed looks like this.



Nasal Glucagon

Nasal glucagon is a dry powder. It is in a spray pump that is easy to take anywhere. It is in a single dose form. This means you can't use it again once you have sprayed the glucagon in the nose. You do not have to prepare it.

Once you take it out of the container, simply:

1. Hold the sprayer between your fingers and thumb
2. Insert the tip into one nostril until your fingers touch the bottom of the nose
3. Push the plunger all the way down



The emergency kit for nasal glucagon looks like this:



Keep information on how to give glucagon with the glucagon medicine, and review these steps often with your family, friends, and people you work with.



BE PREPARED FOR A SEVERE LOW BLOOD SUGAR EMERGENCY!

Helpful Tips:

- Train the people you live and work with on how to help you if you have a severe low.
 - Tell them that if you are passing out they should help you lay down and put a pillow or towel under your head. This will help protect you in case you have a seizure.
 - Show them how to give you glucagon.
 - Have them call 911 if there is no glucagon, if they don't know how to give it, or if you don't wake up within 20 minutes after getting the glucagon.
 - Teach them never to force you to eat or drink if you are passed out. It could make you choke.
- Learning how to give the injection that needs to be mixed requires some training, often in your doctor's office. You can also use the glucagon app on your phone for directions on how to use and give the glucagon shot.
- Giving the nasal spray and the injection that does not need to be mixed is simple. It can be learned by looking at the instructions or watching a short video.
- Keep a kit where family members, people you live with and people you work with know where to find it so they can give the glucagon, if needed.
- Always make sure the kit is up to date and has not expired.
- It takes about 10 minutes to wake up after the glucagon. You may feel sick to your stomach. Be sure to drink some fluids that have sugar in them to help raise your sugar.
- If you don't wake up after 10 minutes, you can have another dose of glucagon if it is available.
- After using glucagon, make sure to call the pharmacy and refill the prescription.

How can I get a glucagon emergency kit?

Ask your diabetes team for a prescription for this kit every year. Make sure to buy a new kit every year when your old one expires.

Do not forget to always make sure a family member, friend or co-worker knows when and how to give you the glucagon.



Why can't I just treat a severe low with juice, sugar tablets or soda?

Trying to treat a severe low blood sugar the same way you treat mild low blood sugar may not be possible. You may not be able to swallow. Eating or drinking will not bring your blood sugar up fast enough. Glucagon is a hormone that makes your liver produce glucose very fast. This makes your blood sugar go up fast and keeps you safe.

